Policy Advisory Systems & Policy Advice Utilisation: a Bird's Eye View on the Literature

By

Athanassios Gouglas

KU Leuven Public Management Institute

Paper drafted for internal use in view of the preparation for a KU Leuven OT Project on

"Policy Advice Utilisation in European Policy Advisory Systems"

Rough Draft

Not to be cited or distributed

Introduction

Research on policy advice is not new. Since the seventies, scholarly attention has been drawn either into the study of specific sets of policy advisory actors (policy workers, policy analysts, think tanks) or into the use of scientific and expert knowledge by government bodies. Moreover, until recently, policy advice "has been studied more from the philosophical and normative positions than from the analytical and empirical perspectives" (Vesely 2013, p. 199). Peters and Barker (1993), in an edited volume drawing upon the theoretical and empirical contributions of 12 different authors, were first to contribute to the understanding of policy advice as information flowing in large supply within the contemporary policy advice process, with institutions playing a major role in determining its final use. In the mid-nineties, the introduction of the concept of policy advisory systems by Halligan (1995), rebalanced scholarly towards the investigation of what Craft and Howlett (2013, p. 187) call the "synergistic and interactive effects" of policy advice-giving actors within broader policy advisory systems. Beyond actors, of equal importance is the policy advisory system as a unit of analysis itself, as well as how advice is organised within it and with what results. Vesely (2013, p. 199). How are policy advisory systems organised? How are the actors within them configured? Is there convergence or divergence across countries and policy domains? What determines actors' influence and what is the impact of such configurations upon policy making? How do policy advisory systems change in time?

The examination of past studies reveals that, despite advances, the research agenda on policy advisory systems remains open. To begin with, policy advice as a concept remains nebulous in contrast to the more specific concept of scientific knowledge and expert evidence. More importantly, little is known about the structure and actor configuration of policy advisory systems outside Anglo-Saxon countries. Even there, important advisory system actors, such as private consultants remain understudied. Furthermore, the reasons why policy advisory systems may differ across countries and policy areas have not been thoroughly studied. In addition, the determinants of actors' influence remain an unresolved issue, while the impact of policy advisory systems upon policy making remains also understudied. Finally, unlike the developing yet open research agenda on policy advisory systems, theoretical and empirical work on use of policy advice, what Brans, Van Damme and Gaskell (2010, p. 17) call "*policy advice utilization*" remains less developed, if not embryonic.

In the present paper we review the literature on policy advice. In particular we focus on what we know and what we don't know on policy advisory systems and policy advice utilisation. We do this by employing a traditional narrative review method. In order to add some rigour in the review process we organise the material around key themes and questions that emerge as important in the literature. This is done in three sections. First, we begin with a discussion on the very definition of policy advice. Does policy advice, presently defined as a background concept, adequately delimits our field of enquiry or should we better construct a systematised one? In the second section we proceed with an examination of what the literature says on policy advisory systems. What are policy advisory systems and how may the policy advice process be conceptualised within them? More importantly what do past studies reveal on policy advisory system configuration and why are they structured the way they do? How do such systems change in time and towards what direction? What can be said on the determinants of actors and their influence? Finally, the third section deals with policy advice utilisation. We present literature insights on three crucial issues: a) how may we conceive use of policy advice, b) who are the users of advice and why do they seek advice, c) what determines use of advice?

1. Policy advice:

1.1. Definition

According to Halligan (1998, p. 1686) "policy advice in the sense that it is understood today is relatively recent". During the course of the twentieth century, as the policy environment became more complicated, decision makers have increasingly become more and more reliant on the policy advice function (Halligan 1998, p. 1686). But what is policy advice? How is it actually being understood by scholars?

Definitions of policy advice abound. Peters and Barker (1993, p. 2) see advice, not as scientific fact, but as "informed opinion", thus breaking away from the tradition of looking into advice as "systematic knowledge, structured rationality and organised creativity" (Dror 1971 quoted in Peters and Barker 1993, p. 2). Halligan (1998, p.1686) too argues that policy advice must be seen as fundamentally "covering analysis of problems and the proposing of solutions", generally referring to the expert opinion offered to a government about a course of action. On a rather similar tone, scholars in more recent studies (Brans et al 2010, p. 15, Bossens et al 2013, p. 3, Van Damme et al 2011, p. 126) define policy advice as "an opinion or recommendation offered as a guide for future policy".

According to Peters and Barker (1993, p. 2) modern governments are major consumers of such policy advice, while providing advice to governments "has become a very large game which almost any number can play". Policy advice may be the product of policy analysts, but also of a broad range of actors inside and outside government such as scientists, civil servants, political appointees, NGOs, think tanks and international organisations. Referring to Jones (1982), Peters and Barker (1993, p. 9) argue that the 'cozy little triangles' that once dominated policy making now have become 'big, sloppy hexagons'. Halligan (1995) too documents the expansion of policy advice supply through his concept of policy advisory system, while Craft and Howlett (2012, p. 85) reach the conclusion that even informal advice coming from colleagues, friends and relatives may be seen as policy advice.

But if the decision maker's friends and relatives provide advice, then it may be argued that the there is a high risk of conceptual stretching, concept misinformation and degreeism. Does all informed opinion or recommendation offered as a guide to future policy constitute policy advice? It may be argued that the above definitions provide us with a background concept, while we are in need of a more systematised one. By background concept we mean "a constellation of potentially diverse meanings associated with a given concept" (Radaelli 2003, p. 31, Adcock and Collier 2001, p. 530). By systematised concept we mean "a specific formulation adopted by a particular group of researchers" and one that is "commonly formulated in terms of an explicit definition" (Radaelli 2003, p. 31, Adcock and Collier 2001, p. 530). While it is relatively straightforward to define policy advice as a background concept, it is much trickier to create a systematised one, which would give us the opportunity to properly delimit our field of inquiry. Such a systematised concept of policy advice begs for addressing a set of crucial issues. Some of them are adequately addressed in the literature, others not.

1.2 Advice vs scientific knowledge

What is the relationship of policy advice with data, information, evidence and scientific knowledge? Majone (1989, p. 1) reminds us that "as politicians know only too well, but social scientists too often forget, public policy is made of language". Advice in this respect is seen neither as objective scientific knowledge, nor as a formal technique of problem solving, but as

argumentation and persuasion. Persuasion is needed in order to increase the acceptability of advice but also the willingness to act on inconclusive evidence, since "facts and values are so intertwined in policy making that factual arguments unaided by persuasion seldom play a significant role in public debate" (Majone 1989, p. 6,7,37-41).

In their work on policy advice and the advice process, Peters and Barker (1993, p. 3) argue that there are three dimensions of policy related information: a) content of advice, b) whether advice actually exists, c) "extent to which it has already been processed by individuals and organisations outside government". Referring to context they bring home the point that advice is neither just facts, nor simply opinions presented in a neatly separated package-form to policy makers. As a matter of fact, facts and opinions are so closely intertwined that there is "no escaping the influence of opinion on the information that is being presented to government decision makers" (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 10). Referring to the actual availability of advice as knowledge to governments, they stress the point that there are times when knowable information does not exist on an issue, but governments need to create it (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 4-5). Finally, they highlight the distinction between raw data and processed data (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 10). Policy advice is neither raw data, nor is it only objective scientific knowledge. At the basis of policy advice is the conversion of raw data into "information conforming to the categories and contexts used within the decision making organisation" (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 10). To put it simply, advice is opinion and interpretation intertwined with attempts at creating objective facts. Halligan (1998, p. 1686) too highlights the fact that advice is different to simple information, since it "adds interpretation and proposals on how to proceed".

Brans, Van Damme and Bossens(Brans et al 2010, p. 44, Van Damme et al. 2011, p. 126, Bossens et al. 2013, p. 3), bring home the point of Peter and Barker (1993) that policy advice is opinion and recommendation, used as a guide for future policy. However, in a comparative study on European education councils, commissioned by the European Commission, the above mentioned scholars (Brans et al 2010, Van Damme et al 2011, Bossens et al 2013) also bring into the picture Lindquist's (1990, p. 26 – 34) approach to policy relevant knowledge and information. According to Lindquist (1990, p. 26-34), policy related knowledge produced by scientists and striving for parsimony exists alongside policy relevant information, what he calls 'policy inquiry'. The latter may be broken down into "three broad categories of structured information": raw data, research and analysis. It may be argued that while Lindquist (1990) starts with a broader understanding of what constitutes policy related information and therefore advice, his final typology is rather restrictive.

1.3 The limits of policy advice: advice vs interaction

If policy advice does not equal raw data, nor is it equated to the product of scientific research and technical policy analysis, then "how can we differentiate advice from other forms of interaction on policy (Brans et al 2010, p. 26)"? According to an OECD report (2001, quoted in Brans et al

(2013, p. 26) it may be argued that consultation and active participation leads to delivering products with the status of advice. But if active participation of that sort is policy advice, then what can be said about the claim of Craft and Howlett (2012, p. 85) that even the product of informal advice by friends and relatives may be considered policy advice? Would it not be appropriate to distinguish between *policy advice* and general *advice*?

1.4 Policy advice and the policy cycle

Moreover, the question arises whether advice exists outside the policy formulation stage and what types of policy advice are there? Halligan (1995, p. 139) makes the distinction between advice for policy formulation and advice for implementation, that is "production engineering" advice. However, his approach to the subject seems to favour the view that policy advice exists primarily at the policy formulation stage (Halligan 1998, p. 19686). But could it not be that even a recommendation over a problem that needs to be addressed (agenda setting stage) also be considered advice? And what can we say about the products of policy evaluation?

1.5 Types of policy advice

Equally important is the distinction among types of advice. What kinds of policy advice are there? Halligan (1995, p. 139) makes the distinction among strategic and informational, strategic and operational, policy and political advice. Craft and Howlett (2012, p.91) have constructed a typology of four types of content of advice: a) pure political and policy process advice, b) medium to long term policy steering advice, c) short-term reactive and fire fighting advice, d) evidence based policy making. Finally, Tenbensel (2008) argues that there exist three types of knowledge relevant for policy making: a) episteme (scientific), b) techne (experiential) and c) phronesis (practical value rationality). Upon which exactly type of policy advice must we focus our research efforts?

Conclusion

Summing up this section on policy advice, it may be argued that the concept remains nebulous. Different authors assign different meanings to policy advice. This, however, increases the risk of concept misformation, conceptual stretching and degreeism. As Radaelli (2003, p. 28) has argued when dealing with the Europeanisation research agenda, "concepts that are not well defined lead to confusion and elusive language ... Concepts without negation are universals, they point to everything". As Sartori (1970, p. 1042) was first to note in the early seventies, such concepts are "conceptions without specified termination or boundaries". In view of this, it may be argued that the developing policy advisory system and policy advice utilisation research agenda could benefit from a more systematised definition of what constitutes a most central concept under investigation.

2. Policy advisory systems

2.1 A definition

Scholarly attention on policy advice has traditionally focused on the study of specific individual sets of actors, such as for instance policy workers and analysts. The landmark work on policy analysts, done by Meltsner (1975, 1976, 1979) in the seventies first comes to mind. However, as Craft and Howlett (2013, p. 187) argue, despite the merits of such studies, they do not address the "interactive" and "synergistic" effects of actors as members of a policy advisory system. Such policy advisory systems appear to "arise in almost every instance of decision-making" (Craft and Howlett 2013, p. 187). Referring to the evolution of the policy analyst's profession since the '60s, Radin (2013, p. 18) argues that "by the end of the 20th century, the Machiavellian image of the policy analyst as an advisor to the Prince was replaced by an image of an individual operating (usually in a public organisation) along with other policy analysts in both public and non-public organizations". Peters and Barker (1993, p. 1) were first to attempt a more complete analysis of the policy advice process, perceived as the process "by which governments deliberately acquire and passively receive ... advice on decisions and policies which may be broadly called informative, objective or technical. However, it was not till the mid-nineties when the concept of policy advisory system came to the fore.

Policy advisory systems were defined by Halligan (1995) as systems "of interlocking actors, with a unique configuration in each sector and jurisdiction, who provide information, knowledge and recommendations for action to policy makers" (Craft and Howlett 2012, p. 80). Similarly, other authors define the policy advisory system as that "set of actors, inside and outside government, who provide advice to policymakers, and the informal and formal procedures and mechanisms that exist to acquire advice from these actors" (Bossens et al 2013, p. 2). Since 1995 work on policy advisory systems has seen an important increase in volume and scope (Halligan 1998, Howlett, 2009a, 2009b, Brans et al 2010, Howlett and Wellstead, 2011, Wellstead et al. 2011, Craft and Howlett 2012, 2013, Bossens et al 2013, Fobé et al 2013, Howlett and Migone 2013a, Howlett and Migone 2013b, Vesely 2013). However, as we shall see below the research agenda remains open. Crucial topics such as the conceptualisation of policy advisory systems, the structure and configuration of actors within them, advisory system dynamics, influence of actors and finally the impact of policy advisory systems upon policy making, are still open to further theoretical development and empirical investigation. We proceed with examining where the literature stands in relation to those issues.

2.2 Conceptualising the policy advisory system

Scholars have proposed several conceptual models of policy advisory systems. It may be argued that the existing models fall under three broad categories: a) locational (market analogy, location and control), b) content based, c) communication process.

- *Locational models*

Location based models focus on the location of suppliers of advice into the policy advisory system. Several such conceptual models have been proposed. As Craft and Howlett (2012, p.81) inform us, early efforts see the advisory system as a market place for policy ideas (Table 1) with demand, supply and a set of brokers to match supply and demand (Lindquist 1998, Maloney et al 1994, Clark and Jones 1999, March et al 2009). According to Lindquist (1990, p. 29), "positing a model of users and producers of knowledge is a common starting point for developing arguments" also in the knowledge utilisation literature (Weiss 1977, 1978, 1980, Knot and Wildavsky 1980, Bellavita 1981, Bardach 1984, Wittrock 1985). As Peters and Barker (1993, p. 3) argue "the market analogy of buying and selling seems appropriate, as we can easily think about a market for information for government, with many sellers and a number of buyers". This market for policy advice is not monopsonistic. On the contrary, various governmental institutions compete for information sources and control over information even on the same subject (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 3).

Table 1: Policy advisory system as a market place. Source Craft and Howlett 2012, p. 81-82

Proximate decision makers	Consumers of policy analysis and advice. Those with actual authority to make policy decisions: cabinets, executives, parliaments, congresses, legislatures, senior administrators
Knowledge producers	Academia, statistical agencies and research institutes who provide basic scientific data upon which analyses are often based
Knowledge brokers	Intermediaries between knowledge generators and proximate decision makers packaging data and information into usable form (permanent specialised research staff, commissions, task forces, non-governmental specialists)

Source Craft and Howlett 2012, p. 81 - 82

Contrary to conceptualising the advisory system as a market place for advice, Halligan (1995, p. 139) proposes an alternative locational model, based on flows of information and influence. In particular, the policy advisory system may be conceptualised as standing upon two fundamental dimensions: a) location of advising actors vis à vis the government and b) degree of government control over policy advice (Table 2).

Table 2: Locational model of the policy advisory system. Source Halligan 1995, p. 141

	Government control	
Location	High	Low
Public service	Senior departmental policy advisors Central agency advisors/strategic policy unit	Statutory appointments in public service
Internal to government	Political advisory systems Temporary advisory policy units • Ministers offices • First ministers offices	Permanent advisory policy units Statutory authorities
External	Parliaments (e.g. a House of Commons) Private sector/non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on contract Community organisations subject to government Federal international organisations	Legislatures (e.g. US Congress Trade unions, interest groups Community groups Confederal international communities/organisations

Much more recently, Howlett and Walker (Howlett, 2011, Howlett & Walker, 2012), in a work where they investigate the roles of policy managers as a group of privileged insiders within the governmental policy advisory system in Canada, make the distinction between proximate and peripheral actors. Accordingly, using the criterion of whether these actors come from the public/ governmental sector or the non-governmental sector one, they come up with four types of actors: core actors, public sector insiders, private sector insiders and outsiders. Based on the distinction between proximate and peripheral actors and bringing also into the picture the dimension of government control, Vesely (2013, p. 201) classifies policy advisory systems using "four types of loci where policy advice is generated ... based upon two basic dimensions" (Table 3). In his typology policy advisory systems may be proximate internal or peripheral external projecting high levels of government control, or peripheral internal or proximate external projecting less so.

Table 3: Locational model of policy advisory system. Source Vesely (2013), p. 201

		Government control	
		High	Low
Part of government sector	Yes	Proximate internal PAS	Peripheral internal PAS
	No	Peripheral external PAS (external actors with contracts)	Proximate external PAS (external actors without contracts)

- *Content based models*

Moving away from the locational (inside/outside of government, control/no control from government) approach, Craft and Howlett (2012, 2013) argue that the policy advisory system landscape must be seen as a complex web of advice giving actors in the middle of which stand the policy makers. In such a network like advisory landscape, policy advice giving activities are classified according to content of advice. Craft and Howlett (2011, p. 89-92) organise policy advice giving actors (advisers, civil servants, NGOs, think tanks etc) within the policy advisory system according to four types of content of advice: a) short-term reactive and procedural, titled "pure" political and policy process advice, b) long-term anticipatory and procedural, titled medium to long term steering advice, c) short-term substantive, titled short-term crisis fighting advice and d) long term/anticipatory and substantive, titled Evidence Based Policy Making (table 4).

Table 4: Content based policy advisory system. Source Craft and Howlett (2012, p. 91)

	Short-term/reactive	Long-term/anticipatory
Procedural	*"Pure" political and policy process advice* Traditional Political parties, parliaments and legislative committees (House of Commons, Congress); regulatory agencies	*Medium to long-term policy steering advice* Traditional Deputy ministers, central agencies/ executives; royal commissions; judicial bodies
	As well as Internal as well as external political advisers, interest groups; lobbyists; mid-level public service policy analysts and policy managers; pollsters	As well as Agencies, boards and commissions; crown corporations; international organisations (e.g. OECD, ILO, UN)
Substantive	*Short-term crisis and fire-fighting advice* Traditional Political peers (e.g. cabinet); executive office political staffs	*Evidence-based policy-making* Traditional Statistical agencies/department; senior departmental policy advisors; strategic policy unit; royal commissions
	As well as Expanded ministerial/congressional political staffs; cabinet + cabinet committees; external crisis managers/consultants; political strategists; pollsters; community organisations/NGOs; lobbyists, media	As well as Think tanks; scientific and academic advisors; open data citizen engagement-driven policy initiatives/web 2.0; blue ribbon panels

Source: Craft and Howlett

- *Communication process models*

Finally, inspired by Rich and Oh's (2000, p. 179) work on information/knowledge utilisation, Bossens et al (2013) appear to take a whole different view on the subject. The policy advisory process is conceptualised as "a communication process in which we can distinguish between sender, receiver, message, channel" (Bossens et al. 2013, p. 3). The *senders* are the suppliers of policy advice and, using a rather locational approach, they are grouped under three categories: a) inside government (policy analysts in departments and agencies), b) intermediate in broader government (advisory councils) and c) outside of government subdivided into academic

(university researchers) and non-academic advisers (trade unions, interest groups, private companies etc). Their roles may be formal or informal. Policy advice in turn is conceptualised as a *message* consisting of facts and opinion, which in turn, using Tenbensel's (2008) typology is further classified into three types: a) scientific (episteme), b) experiential (techne) and c) value driven (phronesis). The advice provided by the *senders* may be solicited or unsolicited (Halligan 1995, p. 140), with advice mechanisms being eitheropen or closed, temporary or permanent and advice being given on the basis of either consensus or by considering the minority view (Bosses et al 2013, p. 6). The *receivers* refer to the policy makers, a category which in turn comprises of ministers, ministerial advisers, members of the legislature and administrators. Finally, *channel* refers to the way policy advice is transmitted to the policy makers. Using Lindquist's (1990) suggestion, four main ways of communicating advice are discerned: a) direct convocation activities, where advising actors discuss advice directly with the user, b) indirect convocation activities, where the advice is transmitted indirectly through symposia or workshops, c) direct publication activities, like memos and reports disseminated directly to the user, d) indirect publication activities, where advice is disseminated in intermediary bodies with the aim of influencing policy makers. To those traditional convocation activities one may add social and new media as a new and influential channel of communication and potentially a new area of theoretical and empirical investigation.

2.3 Configuration of actors and structure of policy advisory systems

But what do advisory systems look like? How are policy advisory systems structured? What is the dominant configuration of actors within such systems? For Halligan (1995, p. 141), the advice system "comprises several types of bureaucratic and political adviser". At the core of the system sits the single advice provider, usually the public servant, who provides advice to a specific client, usually the minister or his cabinet. Next to this arrangement there is usually some extra form of policy instrument like a task force, an administrative research unit or political advisers. The exact nature and role of these different organisational options differ across countries (Halligan 1995, p. 140).

Contrary to this "vertical advice process", Craft and Howlett (2013, p. 189, 192) argue, in line with numerous studies (Bakvis 1997, Radin 2000, Parsons 2004, Hoppe and Jeliazkova 2006, Prince 2007, Dobuzinskis, Howlett and Laycock 2007, Maley 2011) that the policy making environment today is more fluid, pluralised and polycentric. They conceptualise the policy advice landscape as a "complex horizontal web" of policy actors and bodies, at the centre of which sit the policy makers. Policy actors stretch beyond the traditional professional bureaucracy: political advisers, government research agencies, non-departmental agencies, legislatures' research departments, temporary advisory policy units, ad hoc commissions and committees, think tanks, trade unions' research units, political parties and interest groups study units, NGO's policy analysis units, community organisations and consulting firms, but also citizens, even "colleagues, friends and relatives providing less formal or professional forms of

advice" (Craft and Howlett 2012, p. 85). Craft and Howlett (2013, p. 192), paint a picture of a clear shift from "the largely internal, technical, 'speaking truth' policy advising toward the diffuse and fragmented 'sharing of influence' approach". This is what Hoppe (1999, p. 201) refers to as a shift from 'from speaking truth to power' to 'making sense together'.

Evidence produced from empirical studies in countries such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Canada and Germany suggest that there are important differences in the sourcing and configuration of advisory actors and influence in the supply of policy advice in different countries (Craft and Howlett 2013, p. 188). The 'sharing truth with multiple actors' model may not characterise all jurisdictions (Craft and Howlett 2013, p. 192).

Trying to explain why advice systems vary, Halligan (1995, p.141-142) offers a range of explanatory factors: a) the degree to which an advisory system is liable to the preferences prevailing within the political system, b) state structure and political system (unitary, federal, single party-majoritarian, parliamentary-presidential, multi-party consensual), c) degree of openness to external influence, d) the policy domain, e) variations in organisations and interests among policy sectors, f) personal styles of leaders. Taking for example preferences prevailing within the political system Halligan (1995, p.141) distinguishes between two types of advisory systems. On the one hand we find those dominated by public servants. These are policy advisory systems within the administrative state tradition. There is, however, a second possibility: to be "dominated by politicians, where there is reliance on political appointments and the sharing of the spoils of power, particularly under conditions of one party-government" (Halligan 1995, p. 141). The second version is a politicized system of advice. Moving to the degree of openness, Halligan (1995, p. 141) suggests, along the lines of Peters and Barker (1993, p. 11) that there is a distinction between a closed and an open policy advisory system, with the latter providing "more access points for external interests and a tendency to rely more heavily on a broader and more diverse range of contributions". Finally, advisory system structure and configuration may also vary according to whether these systems are formal or informal, institutionalised or not, temporary / ad hoc or permanent (Halligan 1995, p. 140, Peters and Barker 1993, p. 11, Seymour-Ure 1987). It may be argued that the problem with past studies here is twofold: a) explanatory models as to why policy advisory systems vary do exist, but are largely underdeveloped, b) empirical work on countries outside the Anglo-Saxon state tradition is minimal.

2.4 Policy advisory system dynamics

The issue of policy advisory system change has only recently become the focus of increased scholarly attention (Craft and Howlett 2013, Vesely 2013). Halligan (1995) did, however, deal with the issue of policy advisory system dynamics. Policy advisory systems are seen to be experiencing changes on three fronts: a) internal to the public service, b) internal to government, c) external to both the public service and government. In the case of the public service Halligan

(1995, p. 145 – 148) singles out the following trends: internal reorganisation and the separation of policy formulation and implementation, reduction of the policy capacity of departments, transformation of the policy adviser into a manager and finally increase of policy evaluation activities meaning greater pressure for scrutiny of policy advice. In the case of internal changes to government, Halligan (1995, p. 149 – 151) underlines the trend of increased use of political advice (political advisers) next to the use of alternative advisory systems such as non-departmental agencies, the legislature, advisory bodies and expert groups. Finally, in relation to advice coming from the external environment Halligan (1995, p. 152 – 158) highlights the influence of three distinctive sources of advice: a) NGOs, including lobbies, community groups, think tanks, trade unions and other interest groups, b) public consultation with citizens and c) international actors: transnational organisations (OECD), international networks and epistemic communities. According to Halligan (1995, p. 142, 143) the reason why this change is happening is traced to three modes of thinking: a) managerial, promoting the introduction of private sector principles and practices into the public sector, b) economic focusing on market, deregulation and competition and c) political ideas coming from politicians who directly challenge the strength of the civil service. Finally, as we saw above, Halligan (1995, p. 162) brings home the point that "while there is considerable convergence among countries, they still retain their own preferences".

In their very recent work, Craft and Howlett (2013) highlight two specific dimensions of policy advisory system change: a) externalisation and b) politicisation. The former relates to a move away from internal to government suppliers of policy advice towards a plurality of policy advice suppliers outside government. The latter refers to the displacement of non-partisan neutral advice with advice that is more partisan-political in nature. Why is this change happening? Does it actually happen everywhere? According to Craft and Howlett (2013, p. 190) there are four main arguments why externalisation is taking place. On the demand side users of advice demand for more political control and responsiveness over the administration, while they also look for solutions to 'wicked' problems posed by globalisation and which the traditional civil service cannot solve. On the supply side public sector reform has eroded the policy capacity of the civil service, while the increasing supply of advice from external sources also leads to more outsourcing.

But is the externalisation hypothesis without problems? Vesely (2013, p. 200) argues that despite externalisation been a very visible trend in policy advisory system development, its extent differs in different countries and different policy domains. As with most research on policy advisory systems empirical evidence supporting the externalisation thesis is almost exclusively drawn from Canada, the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. Research in France and Sweden (Boston, 1994, Saint-Martin, 1998) shows, that "the phenomenon is not as worldwide as expected" (Vesely 2013, p. 2000). In addition "the level of externalization also seems to vary in different policy domains" (Bakvis, 2000 quoted in Vesely 2013, p. 200).

Moving finally to politicisation, and despite the lack of the concept's specificity Craft and Howlett (2013, p. 191) argue that what we see is a "juxtaposition of content and location". In contemporary systems, it is not only civil servants who are pressured to provide advice with political considerations, but also political advisers who get increasingly involved in technical policy advice giving or coordinating and brokerage functions. The extent of course to which this is happening differs again by state administrative tradition, country and sector (Connaughton 2010a, 2010b, Craft 2013, Eichbaum and Shaw 2007, 2013, Gouglas 2013, Maley 2000, 2013, OECD 2011).

2.5 Policy advisory system impact on policy making

Research thus far points to the direction that policy advisory systems are changing, though, in different ways across countries and policy domains. Whereas the theoretical and empirical research agenda on this aspect is developing, it may be argued that there is a lack of theory-driven, comparative research on the organizational characteristics of policy advisory systems and their effects. How do policy advisory systems impact upon policy making? What we know thus far is on the range of impacts that different forms of advice might have on decision making. According to peters and Barker (1993, p. 16-19) there are four possible information situations and consequent impacts upon policy making. In the simplest scenario, adequate information leads to a programmed decision. In the worst scenario, when governments feel that there is not a basis for information and no effective way of intervening into a policy problem, inspiration decisions are the norm. Two other scenarios are possible though. When governments perceive advice as offering a solution to a problem, but without advice having adequately established the problem's cause, then they make pragmatic decisions. Finally, when decision makers feel they know the root of a problem, but cannot agree on the solution, then they face a situation of a bargaining decision. Solutions are chosen through a process of bargaining with alternative approaches within the political game (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 16-19).

In view of the above, it may be argued that having no research on the impact of policy advisory system configurations upon policy making is a paradox. According to institutional and organizational theory the way an advisory system is structured would be expected to have significant implications for the kind of advice that is generated and listened to by governments. Consequently it would be expected to have an effect on policy making. Where the literature provides us with insights, though, is in relation to factors determining advising actors' influence.

2.6 Determinants of actors' influence

As we have already seen above, influence is a fundamental dimension behind various policy advisory system descriptions and classifications (Halligan 1995, 1998, Craft and Howlett 2012, 2013). But what determines the influence of a policy actor within the policy advisory system? For those scholars conceptualising the advice giving process as a kind of market place for advice the source of influence is proximity with decision makers. Policy brokers play here an important

role, since as Craft and Howlett (2012, p.82) argue, citing Verschuerre (2009) and Lindvall (2009), it is they who possess the "ability to translate distant research results into usable forms of knowledge".

Halligan (1995, p. 140) takes a different approach to the issue. Influence within policy advisory systems varies according to two central dimensions: a) the location of policy advice, that is whether advice is internal or external to government, and b) the degree of control the government exercises upon sources and actors of advice. In this respect Halligan (1995) argues that it is not only location (proximity) vis à vis the proximate decision maker that determines influence, but also the degree that governments control actors located either internally or externally. By this he refers to the extent that decision makers expect proffered advice to be more or less congruent with government aims and ambitions. It has been argued that in the locational model with its focus on the control dimension "the broker is not the only game in town ... some actors are more susceptible to government control than others and therefore they are more likely to articulate advice that decision makers would find more acceptable: that is matching the government's perceptions of best practices, feasibility, and appropriate goals and means for achieving them" (Craft and Howlett 2012, p.82-83).

Finally, not disregarding advancements achieved by earlier locational models of advice, Craft and Howlett (2012, 2013) propose content of advice as a crucial substantive determinant of actors' influence within the policy advisory system. "Taken together with locational measures it is possible to use this additional dimension to get a better sense not only of which actors are likely to influence governments but also about the likely subject of that influence"(Craft and Howlett 2012, p. 84). In this respect actors offering pure political and policy process advice would have a different role and would be also expected to be influential under different circumstances than those offering short term fire fighting advice, medium to long term policy steering advice and evidence based policy making. It may be argued that while our theoretical understanding on actors' influence within policy advisory systems has advanced it is not yet complete. Evidently, there is again a wide lack of empirical investigations in non Anglo-Saxon countries. More importantly, actors' influence does not automatically lead to use of advice by policy makers. The question thus arises. What determines use of advice within a policy advisory system?

Conclusion

Summing up this section on policy advisor systems, investigation of past studies reveals that, despite significant advances, certain fundamental issues in this fast developing research agenda remain open. How are policy advisory systems organised / structured / configured and how do they vary across countries or policy domains and why? How does policy advisory system configuration impact upon policy making? How do policy advisory systems change through time and how? Is there convergence across the board and if not why? In addition, how can we explain

influence of policy advisory system actors? The further development of the policy advisory system research agenda points towards two directions: a) improve theory, b) extent empirical studies to non-Anglo-Saxon countries.

3. Policy Advice Utilisation

We have seen above that advice to governments "has become a very large game which almost any number can play" (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 3). Moreover, as Halligan (1995, p. 138) highlighted and the great majority of scholars agree with, policy advice is also highly contested and competitive (Brans et al. 2010, Craft and Howlett 2012, 2013, Bossens et al 2013, p. 2, Fobé et al. 2013). This in turn means that policy makers may receive too much and too much conflicting advice (Bossens et al 2013, p. 2). From a rational actor model perspective this is good news. Information is essential in allowing individuals to compare alternatives (Rich and Oh 2000, p. 176). However, contrary to what the rational model perspective assumes, existence of great amounts of competing policy advice does not automatically lead to its use. In view of such increased policy advice competition the obvious question then becomes what exactly determines the use of advice? Given the existence of what Knot and Wildavsky (1980, p. 537) call a "crowded policy space" the practical question then arises how can we efficiently organize the advice system in order to balance the demand and supply side? Unlike the developing, yet open, research agenda on policy advisory systems, it may be argued that research on the use of policy advice, what Brans, Van Damme and Gaskell (2010, p. 17, 29, 30) call policy advice utilisation, is still at an embryonic stage of development. In the following section we are going to examine the literature on three main issues: a) how can we conceptualise the use of policy advice, b) who are the users of advice and why do they seek advice, and c) what are the determinants / predictors of policy advice utilisation?

3.1 Conceptualising use of policy advice

The most frequently applied terms to indicate policy advice use are utilisation/utilization, use, influence, impact and uptake, resembling the terminology we usually find in other fields of utilisation studies, like research on evaluation use (Jungen 2013, p. 8). To begin with, use and utilisation in the literature are used interchangeably. However, two points merit attention. First, as some scholars have argued, utilisation may differ from use in that it reflects intended use by intended users (Jungen 2013, p. 8). Second, the very term *policy advice utilization* is only used by Brans, Van Damme and Gaskell (2010, p. 17, 29, 30) in a report on education councils across Europe. Policy advice utilisation is defined here as the impact of policy advice on innovativeness and actual policy (content level results), as well as on social learning, conflict resolution and trust (process level results). Content and process level results may be either objective or subjective, relating either to actual policy influence or to users' satisfaction with the received advice (Table 5).

Table 5: result areas of policy advice. Brans et al (2010, p. 30)

	Objective results	*Subjective results*
Content results	• Innovativeness • Impact on policy	• Satisfaction with content results
Process results	• Social learning • Conflict reduction • Trust	• Satisfaction with process results

Not disregarding problems with measuring innovativeness or process results like social learning, conflict resolution and trust we would like to focus on the difficulties arising in relation to impact on policy. After all impact is an alternative way of looking into the issue of policy advice use. How can impact of advice on policy be measured? Conceptualising impact of policy advice, not to mention operationalising it, appears to be a demanding task (Bekkers et al 2004). In order to face the challenge Brans et al (2013, p. 31) recommend taking into account the insights of past studies on information/knowledge utilisation. Following this recommendation there appears to be several ways in which we can conceptualise the impact of policy advice.

The review of the empirical literature on knowledge utilisation by Amara, Ouimet and Landry (2004, p. 75-77) reveals that use of research falls under three broad categories: a) instrumental use in order to solve clearly predefined problems, b) conceptual use, where research is used in a diffuse and indirect way much like in the garbage can decision making model, and c) symbolic use in order to confirm the programs users want to promote. Furthermore, in her systematic review of the literature on use of policy evaluation Jungen (2013, p. 9) reveals that beyond direct / instrumental, political / symbolic and conceptual / enlightenment use, there are also two other potential types of use: a) process use, referring to the effects of participating in an evaluation and b) imposed use due to external pressure. Focusing specifically on policy advice Brans et al (2010, p.31) suggest that utilisation may be seen and measured as having a) an *instrumental impact*, where use of policy advice equals to a change of behaviour in line with existing recommendations, b) a *conceptual impact*, where advice structures users' perceptions of social reality leading into change of opinion or argumentation, c) an *agenda setting impact*, facilitating the entry of an issue in the public agenda and d) a *political-strategic* impact, facilitating the achievement of one's goals, through better positioning in relation to competing actors.

A second approach to conceptualising use of policy advice is by using the knowledge utilisation ladder. As Lester (1993, p. 274) argues, the benefit of such an approach is that it "incorporates both conceptual and instrumental notions of use". Knot and Wildavsky (1980) have suggested, followed by numerous scholars (Lester 1993, Lester and Wilds 1990, Landry et al 2001, Van de

Graaf and Hoppe 2006) that knowledge utilisation may be seen as a single step by step utilisation ladder. In the first step we find transmission, where advice is communicated to the decision maker. The second step entails cognition, where the decision maker must digest and understand the input. In the third step, reference is explained as use of inputs in public debate meaning that the policy maker's view of the world has been affected. The fourth step is adoption. This refers to the adoption of those parts of advice that agree with existing policy. Finally, the two last stages refer to implementation and impact (Knot and Wildavsky's (1980). Lester (1993) and Lester and Wilds (1990), Landry, Amara and Lamari (Landry et al. 2001), Van de Graaf and Hoppe (2006), merge these last two steps into a single application stage. During the sixth stage of application "utilisation of policy advice is demonstrated in the use of advice in policy practice" (Brans et al. 2010, p. 32). In table 6 below we can the way every step of the ladder is measured by Landry et al (2001, p. 336) using perceptions of the researcher in relation to knowledge utilisation.

Table 6: Stages of Knowledge Utilisation, Source Landry et al (2001), p. 336)

Stages of knowledge utilization. Adapted from Knott and Wildawsky (1980)

Stage 1	Transmission: I transmitted my research results to the practitioners and professionals concerned.
Stage 2	Cognition: My research reports were read and understood by the practitioners and professionals concerned.
Stage 3	Reference: My work has been cited as a reference in the reports, studies, and strategies of action elaborated by practitioners and professionals.
Stage 4	Effort: Efforts were made to adopt the results of my research by practitioners and professionals.
Stage 5	Influence: My research results influenced the choice and decision of practitioners and professionals.
Stage 6	Application: My research results gave rise to applications and extension by the practitioners and professionals concerned.

Despite the policy advice utilisation ladder being of great use in measuring actual impact upon policy, not all of its steps are always transparent (Brans et al 2010, p. 32). As a result, researchers in the study of education advisory bodies across Europe delimit their definition of impact upon policy at only one stage of the single step by step model: the transmission stage. Other scholars (Bossens et al 2013) appear to adopt a similar approach. The quantitative knowledge utilisation literature provides a solution to this impasse by advancing various comprehensive cumulative measures of policy advice use. Past studies point towards two directions. First, much like Lester (1993) and Landry et al (2001) have done, one may construct a single index for policy advice utilisation based on the six cumulative stages of utilisation, using a multiple item scale. Practically speaking, every successive stage would weight more heavily than the previous one, with the users of advice being asked to indicate on a scale (i.e. 1 to 5) how accurately each stage describes their use of advice. The end result of this statistical exercise, based on survey data, would be the construction of use scores per stage, as well as total use scores. They would form the dependent variable of a comprehensive model. A second approach may be taken from Oh and

Rich's (1996, p. 17, Rich and Oh 2000, p. 182) construction of their dependent variable regarding use of information. In this approach, conceptual, instrumental and symbolic uses of policy advice, as well as the single step by step model are deliberately left out. The assumption here is that users are unclear about the meaning of various terms (i.e. conceptual vs instrumental, stages). Instead, use of information, would be better measured not according to typology or steps, but in a general subjective way. This "self-anchored conceptualisation" approach means that use of information is measured by asking users whether in the past year they have referred to policy related information to help them make decisions about a specific policy area (Rich and Oh 2000, p. 182). For their study in mental health policy, utilisation is constructed as a composite variable that combines the users' yes or no answers in relation to different types of information like policy analysis, statistical data or program evaluation.

3.2 Users of advice

We have seen above that users of advice can be grouped either as proximate decision makers or as receivers of advice. In the first category users are the consumers of policy analysis and advice. All those with actual authority to make policy decisions: cabinets, executives, parliaments, congresses, legislatures, senior administrators. In the latter case they are the policy makers, a rather similar category comprising of ministers, ministerial advisers, members of the legislature and administrators. Users, though, can be also categorised using alternative criteria. Are they intended users or unintended users of policy advice? In addition it has been argued that there is a difference between individual use and collective use of advice (Jungen 2013, p. 10).

But why do decision makers and policy makers seek advice? The literature reveals that decision makers seek advice for two main reasons:

a) To legitimate decisions. Policy makers believe that "receiving advice helps governments to appear more open and democratic" (Peters and Barker 1993, p.1). Brans, Vancoppenolle, Van Damme and Fobé (Van Damme et al 2011, p. 127, Fobé et al 2013, p. 226) refer to the perceived need for "interactiveness", that is the need of governments to garner "stronger support for policies via a closer involvement in the policy process of citizens or stakeholders".

b) To improve policy quality. "Governments may accept or seek out advice simply because they want to make the right decisions" (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 2).

In view of this it has been argued that governments want to be seen "willing and accepting towards information almost no matter what its origin" (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 2). However, whether and how information is used differs depending on certain factors. The question then arises what determines the use of advice?

3.2 Determinants of policy advice use

As the policy advisory system literature revealed, a first approach to the subject would be to focus on the issue of actors' influence within the policy advisory system. Influence here is used as synonymous to use. In this case it may be argued that proximity of the advice supplier to the decision maker, location inside or outside government, ability of the user to control advice, and finally content of advice, are crucial determinants of actors' influence within the policy advisory system (Halligan 1995, Craft and Howlett 2012, 2013). As such they may be considered to impact upon the use of policy advice too. Not disregarding the merits of such explanations, it may be argued that influence constitutes a separate concept to use. Actors' influence does not automatically lead to use of advice. Moreover, there is arguably more to the actors' context than proximity to the decision maker or location inside / outside government. Equally, content of advice is not the sole defining characteristic of policy advice, while, finally, control does not cover the broad range of users' needs, nor does it equate with the user's context.

A second approach to the use of advice is to focus on the characteristics of advice itself. We saw beforehand that decision makers seek advice in the form of informed opinion. When this does not exist they deliberately solicit it through a 'knowledge mandate' (Peters and Barker 1993, p.7). For Peters and Barker (1993), the crucial advice characteristic appears to be whether advice offers a solution to a problem or a deeper understanding of the problem itself. Is policy advice solution generating or is it problem exploring? In the case of the former advice is presented as enjoying a greater degree of influence. In the case of the latter its influence is significantly diminished (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 18). The characteristics of policy advice come up as important explanatory factors of policy advice use in other scholarly work too. Moving beyond the problem exploration/solution generation dimension, Bossens et al (2013, p. 7-8) argue that use of advice may be explained along four explanatory dimensions: a) kind of advice, especially whether the advice is scientific, experiential or value related, using Tenbensel's (2008) approach, b) timing of advice, c) form of advice and d) clarity of insight into a policy problem or solution. On a rather similar tone Brans et al (2012, p. 5) argue that policy advice must be relevant to policy makers, timely, sufficiently substantiated, feasible and clear. According to a British government White Paper (UK Government 1999, p. 9) practitioners appear to ask for advice that is forward looking, outward looking, innovative and creative, using evidence, inclusive, joined up, while it should also build systematic evaluation of outcomes early into the policy process, as well as keep established policy under continuous review.

The third approach is more institutional. Peters and Barker (1993, p. 11) argue that an inadequate structuring of institutions for policy advice seeking and reception may prevent a government from using the available information in the most effective manner. This institutional design may vary according to certain criteria: regularity of use of an institution, the institution's orientation towards governmental and non-governmental actors, development of new information, openness of information received and formality of the procedure. To begin with,

institutions developed for continual use are expected to be more effective in the use of advice than ad hoc ones. Furthermore, an institutional design that enables the reception of a broad spectrum of information without becoming overloaded will also be more effective. Moreover, institutions that are able to generate tailor made research rather than fit previous research to the needs of a government would also be more effective in using information. Finally, a formal process may also require decision makers to follow up on the advice produced (Peters and Barker 1993, p. 11). From an institutional point of view, it may be argued that the policy advisory system too, with its very structuration and actor configuration, also determines the final use or not of policy advice.

Users' needs constitute a fourth approach to explaining the determinants of policy advice utilisation. We saw above that users seek advice in order to legitimate decisions and improve the quality of policy. This in itself though is not enough to explain use of policy advice. In his study of UK Ministers and advice, Chabal (1993, p. 51) offers evidence that supports the timeliness and timing thesis. Ministers, mostly amateurs in departmental portfolios, are in a constant 'battle against time'. Time constraints are not personal, but fundamental built in characteristics of executive and legislative power systems. This may lead to political executives using the quickest and easiest option. Moreover, Chabal (1993, p. 51) also argues that Ministers may use advice depending on whether they want to delay a decision or not decide at all (inaction). It may be argued that, while in theory the demand side of the policy advisory system comes up as an important predictor of policy advice use, there is a lack of empirical investigations focusing on the users, especially political executives. Such a comprehensive way to understanding policy advice utilisation from a user perspective would be to employ the insights from either the rational action model on information acquisition and knowledge utilisation or the bounded rationality one. From a rational model perspective it is argued that individual actors or organisations engage in a process of optimising their expected utilities by "selecting through a comprehensive analysis the course with the highest pay off" (Rich and Oh 2000, p. 176). In order to achieve optimal utility the actors need to gather and analyse alternatives in a systematic way. This is the point where information becomes central (Rich and Oh 2000, p. 176). However, rational choice models do not explicitly deal with how individuals process information. It is rather believed that information acquisition leads directly to utilisation. Rich and Oh (2000, p. 178-179) summarise the fundamental assumptions of the rational choice model regarding use of information:

- There is perfect information (or amount) of information
- Users are capable of processing all available information
- Users search for all available sources of information and apply the findings to problems
- After acquisition information is automatically disseminated
- After dissemination information is used
- Use of information leads to choice among a set of competing alternatives

Rich and Oh (2000, p. 177) of course reject the automatic linkage between information acquisition and knowledge utilisation and put forward an alternative model driven by bounded rationality assumptions. Their focus is on the user side and especially the way organisational and political interest considerations lead or not to knowledge utilisation. This demand push model focuses on the user as the major factor explaining knowledge utilisation.

For many scholars, users' needs are not important in explaining use of policy advice. It is contextual factors affecting the user that are more crucial (Van de Graaf and Hoppe 2006). This constitutes a fifth approach to explaining use of policy advice. Following Van de Graaf's and Hoppe's (2006) recommendation, in their report explaining use of policy advice in education councils across Europe, Brans et al (2010, p. 18, 19) bring forward an explanation based on organisational characteristics of advisory bodies, like legal status and membership, but also advisory process characteristics, like timing and policy windows. In particular they put forward an empirical model (Table 2) generating 13 variables for the input (7), throughput (3) and output phases (3) of the advisory process (Brans et al 2013, p. 48).

Table 7: Empirical model variables: Source: Brans et al (2013)

EMPIRICAL MODEL		
Input phase	Throughput phase	Output phase
• Administrative support • Legal status • Social status • Principals • Membership • Role • Discretion	• Decision making • *Information sharing* • Interaction intensity	• dissemination • quality (e.g. innovativeness) • utilisation

Moving beyond the knowledge utilisation literature, studies on the use of evidence also provide valuable insights which can be used to approach policy advice utilisation. In her review of the literature on the use of different types of evidence in policy making, Fobé (2013, p. 227) indicates the importance of timeliness and broad societal support for the advice, as well as the legacy of the advisory source as important determinants of influence (Rich 1997, Adamo 2002, Koontz, 2005, Green et al., 2009). Moreover, aspects such as transparency and facilitation of advice production, as well as the very nature of advisory procedures is also thought to increase the influence of advice (Beierle & Cayford, 2002, Beierle, 2000, Edelenbos, Klok, & Van Tatenhove 2009, Papadopoulos & Warin, 2007, Rowe & Frewer, 2004, Sterne & Zagon, 1997, Van Damme & Brans, 2012, Webler & Tuler, 2000 / interaction literature quoted in Fobé 2013, p. 227, 228).

Evaluations too may be also considered a type of evidence or simply policy advice. In her systematic review of the literature on evaluation use, Jungen (2013, p. 12-18) argues that there are different ways to group determinants of evaluation use. Based on a systematic literature review by Cousins and Leithwood (1986) twelve predictors of use were grouped in two categories: characteristics referring to implementation of evaluation and the policy setting. In their categorisation of predictors Court and Young (2006) increase the number of determinants while they re-arrange the categories into characteristics of evidence, the political context and the link between policy and research communities. James and Jorgensen (2009) organise predictors under three categories: information, organisation and the decision maker. Jonshon et al (2009), in what has been the second large systematic literature review since the eighties group determinants of policy evaluation use into three categories: implementation of evaluations, policy setting and stakeholder involvement. Finally, Weyrauch et al (2011) organise predictors around the categories of supply, demand and interplay between demand and supply. This is the approach also adopted by Jungen (2013).

It may be argued that, important as the above explanatory factors and approaches may be, they form more of a check list of variables, not a comprehensive conceptual framework of policy advice utilisation, capable of addressing multiple levels of reality surrounding the policy advice utilisation phenomenon. There exist ways by which such comprehensive models can be constructed. The way Landry et al (2001) approached the issue in view of social science knowledge utilisation in Canada is indicative. Summing up the literature on knowledge utilisation, Landry et al (2001, p. 337) explain that all in all there have been put forward 21 explanatory variables in Sabatier (1978), 110 in Rothman (1980), 15 in Lester (1993) and Lester and Wilds (1990) and finally 47 variables in Huberman (1994) and Huberman and Thurler (1991). Given the large overlapping between variables, Landry et al (2001, p. 337, 338) organise the material around four broad explanatory categories linked to the main theoretical approaches, depicted in Table 8, which they use to build a comprehensive explanatory framework for knowledge utilisation. In every category we find a set of explanatory variables: a) science push variables, coming from the theory that supply of advances in research findings increases demand and therefore utilisation, b) demand pull variables, derived from the premise that utilisation is explained only by the needs of the user, including the user's organisational or political interests, c) dissemination variables, where utilisation is dependent upon research type and dissemination effort, d) interaction variables, where utilisation is explained by the "two-communities metaphor" as well as the presence or lack thereof of sustained interaction between researchers and policy makers. Based on this, Landry et al (2001, p. 338, 341) put forward 11 explanatory variables organised under five categories: types of products, researchers' context, users' context, dissemination and interaction.

Table 8: Determinants of knowledge utilization schools. Source: Belkhodja et al 2007, p. 382

Model	Key Attributes	Criticisms	Utilization Determinants	Past Studies
Science push model	Researchers are the source of ideas for directing research. Users are receptacles for the results of research. Linear sequence from supply of research advances to utilization.	Transfer of knowledge is not automatic. No one assumes the responsibility of the transfer. Raw research information is not usable knowledge.	Notable content attributes are efficiency, compatibility, complexity, observability, trialability, validity, reliability, divisibility, applicability and radicalness. Types of research include basic/applied, general/abstract, quantitative/qualitative, particular/concrete, research domains and disciplines. No relation between technical quality of research results and utilization.	Edwards (1991), Lomas (1993), Dearing and Meyer (1994), Machlup (1980), Huberman and Thurler (1991), Rich (1997), Oh (1997), Dunn (1983), Huberman (1987), Lomas (1990), Landry et al. (2001)
Demand pull model	Users are the major source of ideas for directing research. Linear sequence starts with the identification of the research problems by users.	Focus on the instrumental use of research. Too much stress on users' interests. Omits the interaction between producers and users.	Organizational structures, rules, and norms.	Yin and Moore (1988), Rich (1991), Rich and Oh (1993), Landry et al. (2001)
Dissemination model	Dissemination mechanisms used to identify useful knowledge and transfer it to potential users.	Potential users are neither involved in the selection of the transferable information, nor involved in the production of the research results.	Types of research results and the dissemination effort.	MacLean (1996), Oh and Rich (1996), Lomas (1997), Huberman (1987), Leung (1992), Landry et al. (2001)
Interaction model	Interaction and relationships existing between researchers and users at different stages of knowledge production, dissemination, and utilization.	Can lead to a selective use of research. Can be difficult to establish due to time and turnover issues. Overcomes the criticisms of the previous models.	Explanatory factors identified in the prior models Four categories of actors are: types of research and scientific disciplines, needs and organizational interests of users, dissemination, and linkage mechanisms.	Dunn (1980), Yin and Moore (1988), Huberman and Thurler (1991), Nyden and Wiewell (1992), Oh (1997), Landry et al. (2001)

Using this explanatory framework as our guide and drawing insights from what literature there is on the topic, it may be argued that we could develop such a comprehensive model, this time for policy advice utilisation. The model would comprise of five explanatory categories: a) policy advice characteristics (indicative variables: type, content, amount, source), b) adviser's characteristics (indicative variables: proximity/location, policy making role, numbers), c) user's context (indicative variables: needs, time, styles of decision making, control, attitude to advice), dissemination activities (timing, channel, advice products), d) interactions among advisers and users (indicative variables: direct, formal, participation), e) environmental parameters (indicative variables: type of policy advisory system, policy domain). As argued by Oh (1997, p. 6) in the case of information utilisation, policy advice too may be regarded as "a complex phenomenon

involving environmental, organisational, and attitudinal components as well as the specific characteristics of information".

Conclusion

To conclude, it may be argued that policy advice utilisation, both in terms of theory and empirical investigation, in comparison to the policy advisory system literature where many issues are unresolved but the agenda is developing, is still slowly developing if it is not still positioned at an embryonic stage of development. While significant insights can be drawn from the knowledge utilisation literature, as well as the evidence and evaluation use literatures, studies focusing explicitly on policy advice lag behind. This very reality points research towards the following directions: a) refinement of the concept of policy advice use, b) construction of a comprehensive conceptual framework that identifies the various explanatory factors and their properties, examines how they are linked and finally systematically integrates them, c) empirical investigation in policy advisory systems.

Concluding remarks: leads for further research

In the present paper we used a traditional narrative approach to review the literature on policy advice, focusing particularly on policy advisory systems and policy advice utilisation. This bird's eye view on the literature revealed that research on policy advice is not new. Since the seventies scholarly attention has focused on individual advice giving actors like policy workers and analysts. In the nineties Peters and Barker (1993) attempted to throw light to what has since then been an understudied angle of policy making: policy advice *per se* and the *policy advice process*. However, it was the concept of policy advisory systems, developed by Halligan (1995) in the mid-nineties, that opened new paths in policy advice research, shifting attention away from the examination of specific individual sets of actors and more towards the study of the "interactive" and "synergistic" effects of advising actors as members of a specific advisory system. After a few decades of research, though, the research agenda is still open. From a substantive perspective, crucial issues remain unresolved.

- Policy advice is a nebulous concept that needs further systematisation.
- Little is known of policy advisory systems' structures and configuration of actors in the present time in non Anglo-Saxon countries.
- Even fewer things are known about the non-governmental components of policy advisory systems in most countries.
- In addition, important conceptual issues, such as the various sources and patterns of influence among advisory actors are still unresolved (Craft and Howlett 2012).

- More importantly, despite the existence of empirical studies showing considerable variation of advisory systems across countries and policy domains, there is a lack of theory-driven, comparative research on the organizational characteristics of policy advisory systems and its effects. This is however a paradox. According to organisational and institutional theory one would expect the policy advisory system to affect policy making and therefore one would expect to find more research on that field.

Finally, contrary to the open yet undeveloped to the full policy advisory system research agenda, research on the use of policy advice, what Brans, Van Damme and Gaskell (2013) termed policy advice utilisation, remains much less developed if not embryonic. While there is a plethora of studies on knowledge utilisation, the science-policy interface and the impact of evidence on policy, from which we can gain useful insights, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical studies on the use of policy advice *per se* and its determinants. The question though is pressing. From the point of view of policy science there is a fundamental gap in understanding use of policy advice from decision makers sitting at the centre of a horizontal web of interlocking advisory institutions and actors. From a practical point view decision makers are faced with an ever increasing amount of conflicting advice. How can this be better matched? The question remains open.

References and bibliography

Adcock, R. And Collier, D. (2001), "Connecting Ideas With Facts: The Validity of Measurement", *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 529 - 46

Bakvis, H. (1997), "Advising the executive: Think tanks, consultants political staff and kitchen cabinets", in P. Weller, H. Bakvis, & R. A. W. Rhodes (Eds.), *The Hollow crown: Countervailing trends in core executives* (pp. 84–125). London: Macmillan.

Beierle, T. (2002), "The quality of stakeholder-based decisions", Risk analysis, 22(4), 739–749.

Beierle, T., & Cayford, J. (2002), *Democracy in practice. Public participation in environmental decisions,* Washington, DC: Resources for the Future.

Belkhodja, O., Amara, N., Landry, R. and Ouimet, M. (2007), "The Extent and Organizational Determinants of Research Utilization in Canadian Health Services Organizations", *Science Communication,* Volume 28 Number 3 March 2007 377-417.

Beyer, J. M., and H. M. Trice, (1982), "The utilization process: A conceptual framework and synthesis of empirical findings", *Administrative Science Quarterly* 27: 591–622.

Bossens, N., Van Damme, J. (2013), "Matching supply and demand of policy advice", Paper for International Conference on Public Policy, Grenoble France, 26-28 June 2013

Bogason, P. (2006), "Networks and Bargaining in Policy Analysis", in Peters, G. and Pierre, J. (eds), Handbook of Public Policy, London, SAGE, pp. 97 - 113

Boston, J. (1994), "Purchasing policy advice: The limits to contracting out", *Governance,* 7(1), 1–30.

Brans, M. And De Peuter, B. (2012), "Policy work: a risky profession. An analysis of policy work in the Flemish government administration from a risk management perspective", Paper submitted for the XXIIth World Conference of Political Science, Panel Policy Advice and Policy Work, 8-12 July, Madrid

Brans, M., and Vancoppenolle, D. (2005), "Policy-making reforms and civil service: An exploration of agendas and consequences", in M. Painter & J. Pierre (Eds.), *Challenges to state policy capacity: Global trends and comparative perspectives* (pp. 164–184), Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brans, M., Van Damme, J., and Gaskell, J. (2010), *Balancing expertise, societal input and political control in the production of policy advice, Education councils in Europe*, Brussels: Eunec.

Brans, M., De Peuter, B., Ferraro, G. (2013), "Policy Work old and new: challenge to bureaucratic policy work as a craft", Seminar Paper in Organisation Summer Workshop, 24-26 May, Rhodes, Greece Caplan, N., (1979), "The two communities' theory and knowledge utilization", *American Behavioral Scientist* 22: 459–470.

Craft, J. (2013), "Appointed political staffs and the diversification of policy advisory sources: Theory and evidence from Canada", *Policy and Society*, Volume 32, Issue 3, September 2013, Pages 211–223

Craft, J. and Howlett, M. (2012), "Policy formulation, governance shifts and policy influence: location and content in policy advisory systems", in Journal of Public Policy, vol22, part 2, August 2012

Craft, J. and Howlett, M. (2013), "The dual dynamics of policy advisory systems: The impact of externalization and politicization on policy advice", *Policy and Society*, Volume 32, Issue 3, September 2013, Pages 187–197

Clark, J. R. A., & Jones, A. (1999), "From policy insider to policy outcast? Comite des organisations professionalles agricoles, EU policymaking, and the EU's 'agri-environmental' regulation", *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 17, 637–653.

Connaughton, B. (2010a), "Glorified Gofers, Policy Experts or Good Generalists: A Classification of the Roles of the Irish Ministerial Adviser", Irish Political Studies, 25:3, pp 347-369

Connaughton, B. (2010b), "Minding the Minister: Conceptualizing the Role of the Special Adviser", Ireland Administration, 58(1), pp. 55–75.

Cousins, J. and Leithwood, K. (1986), current empirical research on evaluation utilization, review of educational research, vol 56, no 3, pp 331 – 364.

Dearing, J. W., and G. Meyer (1994), "An exploratory tool for predicting adoption decisions", *Science Communication* 16: 43–57.

Dror, Y. (1964), "Muddling Through – Science or Inertia?", in Public Administration Review, Vol. 24, No3, September 1964, pp 153-157

Edelenbos, J., Klok, P.-J., & Van Tatenhove, J. (2009), "The institutional embedding of interactive policy making insights from a comparative research based on eight interactive projects in the Netherlands", *The American Review of Public Administration*, 39(2), 125–148.

Edwards, L. A. (1991), "Using knowledge and technology to improve the quality of life of people who have disabilities: A prosumer approach". Knowledge Utilization Program, Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Philadelphia.

Fobé, E., Brans, M., Vancoppenolle, D., Damme, J.V. (2013), "Institutionalized advisory systems: An analysis of member satisfaction of advice production and use across 9 strategic advisory councils in Flanders (Belgium)", *Policy and Society*, Volume 32, Issue 3, September 2013, Pages 225–240

Gouglas, A. (2013), "Greek Ministerial Advisers and Policy Making", Paper presented at the International Conference on Public Policy ICPP, 26-28 June 2013, Grenoble.

Halligan J. (1995) Policy Advice and the Public Sector. *In Governance in a Changing Environment*, Guy Peters B. and Savoie D. T. (Eds), 138–172. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Halligan J. (1998) Policy Advice, in *International Encyclopedia of Public Policy And Administration*, vol.3, 1686–1688, Boulder: Westview.

Hallsworth, M., Parker, S and Rutter, J. (2011) *Policy-Making in the Real World: Evidence and Analysis*. London, Institute for Government.

Hoppe, R. (1999) "Policy analysis, science and politics. From 'speaking truth to power' to 'making sense together', *in Science and Public Policy*, 26(3): 201-210.

Howlett, M. (2009a), "A profile of BC provincial policy analysts: Troubleshooters or planners?" *Canadian Political Science Review*, 3(3), 55–68.

Howlett, M. (2009b), "Policy analytical capacity and evidence based policy making: Lessons from Canada", *Canadian Public Administration*, 52(2), 153–175.

Howlett, M. (2011), "Public managers as the missing variable in policy studies: An empirical investigation using Canadian data", *Review of Policy Research*, 28(3), 247–263.

Howlett, M. and Migone, A. (2013), "Policy advice through the market: The role of external consultants in contemporary policy advisory systems", *Policy and Society*, Volume 32, Issue 3, September 2013, Pages 241–254

Howlett, M., & Walker, R. M. (2012). Public managers in the policy process: More evidence on the missing variable? Policy Studies Journal, 40(2), 211–233.

Howlett , M. and Wellstead, A. M. (2011), "Policy Analysis in the Bureaucracy Revisited: The Nature of Professional Policy Work in Contemporary Government", in *Politics & Policy*, 49(4): 613-633.

Howlett, M., Ramesh, M. & Perl, A. (2009). *Studying Public Policy. Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Huberman, M. (1987), "Steps toward an integrated model of research utilization", *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization*, 8: 586–611.

Huberman, M., (1994), "Research utilization: the state of art", *Knowledge and Policy,* 7 (4)., 13–33.

Huberman, M., and G. Thurler (1991), *From research to practice*, Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang SA.

Johnson, K. et al (2009), Research on Evaluation Use, A Review of the Empirical Literature from 1986 to 2005, American Journal of Evaluation, vol 30, no 3, pp 377 – 410.

Jungen, A. (2013), "Understanding the role of evaluation findings in the development aid policy process: a synthesis of the empirical literature on the use of evaluations", paper submitted for the International Conference on Public Policy, Grenoble, 26-28 June

Forester, J. (1984), "Bounded Rationality and Public Policy: Herbert A. Simon and the Decisional Foundation of Collective Choice", in *Policy Sciences* 35: 269-284.

Knott, J., Wildavsky, A. (1980), "If dissemination is the solution, what is the problem?", *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization*, 1 (4)., 537–578.

Koontz, T. (2005), "We finished the plan, so now what? Impacts of collaborative stakeholder participation on land use policy", *Policy Studies Journal*, 33(3), 459–481

Landry, R., Amara, N. and Lamari, M. (2001), "Utilization of social science research knowledge in Canada", *Research Policy* 30: 333–349.

Landry, R., Lamari, M. and Amara, N. (2003), "The extent and determinants of the utilization of university research in government agencies", *Public Administration Review*, 63 (2), 192–205.

Lester, J. P. (1993), "The utilization of policy analysis by state agency officials", *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization*, 14 (3): 267–290.

Lester, J. P., and Wilds, L. J. (1990), "The utilization of public policy analysis: A conceptual framework", *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 13: 313–319.

Leung, P. (1992), “Translation of knowledge into practice”, in NIDRR National CRP panel final report, edited by Walcott and Associates. Washington, DC.

Lindblom, C. (1959), “The Science of Muddling Through”, Public Administration Review 19: 79-88.

Lindquist, E. (1998), “A quarter century of canadian think tanks: evolving institutions, conditions and strategies”, in D. Stone, A. Denham, & M. Garnett (Eds.), *Think tanks across nations: A comparative approach,* (pp. 127–144), Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Lindquist, E. A. (1990), “The Third Community, Policy Inquiry, and Social Scientists”, in S. Brooks and A.G. Gagnon (Reds.), *Social Scientists, Policy, and the State* (p.21-51), New York, Praeger.

Lindvall J. (2009), “The Real but Limited Influence of Expert Ideas”, *World Politics* 61(4): 703–730.

Lomas, J. (1990), “Finding audiences, changing beliefs: The structure of research use in Canadian health policy”, *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 15 (3): 525–541.

Lustick, I (1980), “Explaining the Variable Utility of Disjointed Incrementalism: Four Positions”, in The American Political Science Review, vol. 74, No2, June 1980, pp 342-353

Machlup, F. (1980), *Knowledge and knowledge production*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

MacLean, D. R. (1996), “Positioning dissemination in public health policy”, *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 87 (2): 40–43.

Maley, M. (2000), "Conceptualising Advisers' Policy Work: The Distinctive Policy Roles of Ministerial Advisers in the Keating Government, 1991–96", Australian Journal of Political Science, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 449-470.

Maley, M. (2013), “Conceptualising the role of political advisers in policy making”, Paper submitted for panel 1, session 2 of the ICPP Conference, 28-29 June 2013, Grenoble.

Maloney, W. A., Jordan, G., & McLaughlin, A. M. (1994), “Interest groups and public policy: The insider/outsider model revisited”, *Journal of Public Policy*, 14(1), 17–38.

March, D., Toke, D., Befrage, C., Tepe, D., & McGough, S. (2009), “Policy networks and the distinction between insider and outsider groups: The case of the countryside alliance”, *Public Administration*, 87(3), 621–638.

Meltsner, A. J. (1975), “Bureaucratic policy analysts”, *Policy Analysis*, 1(1), 115–131.

Meltsner, Arnold J.. (1976), *Policy analysts in the bureaucracy*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Meltsner, A. J. (1979), "Creating a policy analysis profession", *Society*, 16(6), 45–51.

Metz, J. (2013) "Expert groups in the European Union: A sui generis phenomenon?", *Policy and Society*, Volume 32, Issue 3, September 2013, Pages 267–278

Nachiappan, K. (2013), "Think tanks and the knowledge–policy nexus in China", *Policy and Society*, Volume 32, Issue 3, September 2013, Pages 255–265

Nyden, P., and Wiewel, W. (1992), "Collaborative research: Harnessing the tensions between researchers and practitioners", *The American Sociologist* 23 (4): 43–55.

Oh, C. H. (1997), "Issues for new thinking of knowledge utilization: Introductory remarks", *Knowledge and Policy: The International Journal of Knowledge Transfer and Utilization*, 10 (3): 3–10.

Oh, C. H., and Rich, R. F. (1996), "Explaining use of information in public policymaking", *Knowledge and Policy* 9 (1): 3–35

OECD (2011), "Ministerial Advisors: Role, Influence and Management", OECD Publishing, Paris.

Papadopoulos, Y., & Warin, P. (2007), "Are innovative, participatory and deliberative procedures in policy making democratic and effective?", *European Journal of Political Research*, 46, 445–472.

Peters B. G. and Barker A. (1993) *Advising West European Governments: Inquiries, Expertise and Public Policy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Plowden, W. (Ed.). (1987), *Advising the rulers*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Prasser, S. (2006a), *Royal commissions and public inquiries in Australia*, Sydney: Lexis Nexis.

Prasser, S. (2006b), *Providing advice to government. Papers on Parliament*, Canberra: Senate of Australia.http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/pubs/pops/pop. 46/providing_advice.htm.

Radaelli, C. M. (2003), "The Europeanization of Public Policy", in Featherstone, K. and Radaelli, C. M. (eds.) The Politics of Europeanization, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.27-56.

Radin, B. A. (2000). Beyond Machiavelli: Policy analysis comes of age. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press

Radin, B. A. (2013), "Policy analysis reaches mid life", *Central European Journal of Public Policy* 7(1).

Rich, R. F., and Oh, C. H. (1993), "Rationality and use of information in policy decisions: A search for alternatives", *Science Communication,* 22: 173–211.

Rowe, G., & Frewer, L. J. (2004), "Evaluating public-participation exercises: A research agenda", *Science, Technology, & Human Values,* 29, 512–557.

Sabbatier, P. (1978), "The acquisition and utilization of technical information by administrative agencies", *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 23, 396–417, September.

Simon, H.A. (1955) "A behavioral model of rational choice", in *Quarterly Journal of Economics 69,* 1: 99-118

Sterne, P., & Zagon, S. (1997), *Public consultation guide. Changing the relationship between government and Canadians*, Quebec: Canadian Centre for Management Development.

UK Government (1999), *Professional Policy Making for the 21st Century*, Report by Strategic Policy Making Team Cabinet Office, September 1999

Van Damme, J., & Brans, M. (2012), "Managing public consultation: a conceptual framework and empirical findings from Belgian case studies", *Public Administration*, 4, 1047–1066.

Van Damme, J., Brans, M., Fobe, E. (2011), "Balancing Expertise, Societal Input and Political Control in the Production of Policy Advice. A comparative study of education councils in Europe", in *Halduskultuur Administrative Culture* (*Halduskultuur Administrative Culture*), issue: 12_2 / 2011, pages: 126145,

Van de Graaf, H. & Hoppe, R. (2006), *Beleid en politiek. Een inleiding tot de beleidswetenschap en de beleidskunde,* Coutinho, Muiderberg

Verschuere B. (2009), "The Role of Public Agencies in the Policy Making Process", *Public Policy and Administration* 24 (1): 23–46.

Veselý, A. (2013), "Externalization of policy advice: Theory, methodology and evidence", *Policy and Society*, Volume 32, Issue 3, September 2013, Pages 199–209.

Webler, T., & Tuler, S. (2000), "Fairness and competence in citizen participation. Theoretical reflections from a case study", *Administration & Society*, 32, 566–595.

Weiss, C.H., (1980), "Knowledge creep and decision accretion", *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization* 1, 381–404.

Wildawsky, A. (1979) *Speaking Truth to Power. The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis*, London: McMillan.

Yin, R. K., and Moore, G. B. (1988), "Lessons on the utilization of research from nine case experiences in the natural hazards field", *Knowledge in Society: The International Journal of Knowledge Transfer* 1 (3): 25–44.